

EMBARGOED UNTIL 7PM EST ON MONDAY, APRIL, 25, 2022

Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra formed to tour Europe and U.S. this summer in artistic defense of their country

- **Proceeds will go to the benefit of Ukrainians**
- **Orchestra will comprise Ukrainian musicians who are refugees, members of internal orchestras, and members of European ensembles**

New York, NY (April 25, 2022)—In another gesture of solidarity with the victims of the war in Ukraine, the Metropolitan Opera and the Polish National Opera will assemble leading Ukrainian musicians into the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra for a European and American tour July 28–August 20, including stops in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, before culminating with concerts in New York and Washington, DC.

The orchestra will include recent refugees, Ukrainian members of European orchestras, and some of the top musicians of Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Odesa, and elsewhere in Ukraine. The Ukraine Ministry of Culture is granting a special exemption to military-age, male members of orchestras inside the country to participate, allowing them to put down weapons and take up their instruments in a remarkable demonstration of the power of art over adversity.

Money raised from the tour will go to the ministry to support Ukrainian artists. Donations can be made to the Ministry of Culture; the website will be provided shortly.

Under the leadership of Canadian-Ukrainian conductor **Keri-Lynn Wilson**, the orchestra will perform a program that includes Ukrainian composer Valentin Silvestrov's Seventh Symphony; Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2, with Ukrainian virtuoso **Anna Fedorova**; and either Brahms's Fourth Symphony or Dvořák's Ninth Symphony.

Leading Ukrainian soprano **Liudmyla Monastyrskya**, who is singing the title role of *Turandot* at the Met this spring, will also perform Leonore's great aria "Abscheulicher!" from Beethoven's *Fidelio*, a paean to humanity and peace in the face of violence and cruelty.

The orchestra's musicians will gather in Warsaw on July 18 for an intensive rehearsal period led by Maestro Wilson to forge the ensemble, followed by the opening concert in the Polish capital at the Teatr Wielki-Polish National Opera on July 28. The residency and opening performance are being paid for by generous funding from the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, under the leadership of Minister Piotr Glinski. The tour will proceed with stops at the BBC Proms, on July 31, for a televised performance; Munich on August 1; the Chorégies d'Orange Festival in France on August 2;

the Berlin Konzerthaus on August 4; the Edinburgh Festival on August 6; Snape Maltings on August 8; the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Festival on August 11; and the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie on August 13. The orchestra will travel to New York on August 16, with concerts at Lincoln Center on August 18 and 19, followed by the final destination, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, on August 20.

The musicians are drawn from the Kyiv National Opera, National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra, and Kharkiv Opera, among other Ukrainian ensembles. Outside of Ukraine, players come from ensembles including the Tonkünstler Orchestra of Vienna, the Belgian National Orchestra, and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

The Metropolitan Opera and the Polish National Opera have played leading roles in the cultural world in standing up to Russia's aggression in Ukraine and in expressing support for the war's victims. The Met was one of the first performing arts organizations to hold a benefit concert for Ukraine, conducted by its music director, **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**, on March 14, drawing headlines worldwide. The Polish National Opera has been harboring refugees from Ukraine and presenting its own benefit concerts in support of its beleaguered neighbor.

In a joint statement, Peter Gelb, the Met's General Manager, and Waldemar Dabrowski, the director of the Teatr Wielki-Polish National Opera, said, "Music can be a powerful weapon against oppression. This tour is meant to defend Ukrainian art and its brave artists as they fight for the freedom of their country."

Maestro Wilson, who grew up in Winnipeg, home of the largest concentration of Ukrainians in North America, originated the idea of forming the orchestra. "I wanted to bring the best orchestral musicians of Ukraine together, from both inside and outside of their country, in a proud display of artistic unity," she said. "I look forward to leading these gifted musicians across Europe and to the United States. This tour is in an expression of love for their homeland and to honor those who have died and have suffered so much."

Ukraine's minister of culture, Oleksandr Tkachenko, expressed his appreciation to the Met and Polish Opera. "Today, culture is showing a completely new side. It can also be the 'soft power' that helps heal wounds. And not only in a figurative sense," he said. "This tour of the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra can help not only to raise funds for supporting Ukrainian artists, it will show the world the diversity and uniqueness of Ukrainian music and Ukrainian performers." He added, "Ukrainian culture is original and deserves to be at the center of attention abroad. We thank our international colleagues for producing the tour."

The assembling of orchestras in the face of violence and in the name of peace has a long tradition. The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra has its roots in an ensemble founded in Palestine by Bronisław Huberman in the 1930s to help rescue Jewish musicians in Europe from the Holocaust. The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, founded in 1999 by the conductor Daniel Barenboim and the Palestinian scholar Edward W. Said, brings together musicians from Israel and Arab nations. The Afghanistan National Institute of Music, long a target of the Taliban, had sent ensembles out into the world before the recent Taliban takeover of the country.

The UK concert agency Askonas Holt, one of the world's leading management agencies, is organizing the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra tour. Sponsors include Bloomberg, the Ford Foundation, and United Airlines. Presenter fees will also help pay for the tour.

Information about tickets will be announced later by individual presenters.

UKRAINIAN FREEDOM ORCHESTRA TOUR BIOGRAPHIES

Maestro Keri-Lynn Wilson's international career as a guest conductor spans more than 20 years, leading some of the world's most prestigious orchestras—such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks—and operas at the world's top opera houses, including Covent Garden, the Bavarian State Opera, Bolshoi Theatre, and the Vienna State Opera. Next season, Ms. Wilson will make her Metropolitan Opera debut, conducting *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and will return to Covent Garden to conduct *La Traviata*. Ms. Wilson's work has been praised as “vividly shaped and nuanced” by *The New York Times*, and “elegantly incisive” by The Telegraph. Ms. Wilson received a nomination for conductor of the year from the Opus Klassik 2020 awards for her recording of Rossini's *Sigismondo* with the Bayerische Rundfunk.

Ukrainian soprano **Liudmyla Monastyrska** made her Metropolitan Opera debut singing the title role of Verdi's *Aida* in 2012, followed by the title role of Puccini's *Tosca*, Santuzza in Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and Abigaille in Verdi's *Nabucco*. This season, she will sing the title role of Puccini's *Turandot* at the Met, Abigaille in *Nabucco* at Covent Garden, and the title role of *Aida* in Naples and Verona. Recent performance highlights include *Aida*, Elisabeth in *Don Carlo*, *Tosca*, and Abigaille at the National Opera of Ukraine; *Lady Macbeth* in Verdi's *Macbeth* at the Bavarian State Opera; Leonora in *Il Trovatore* at La Scala; *Tosca* in Rome and Barcelona; Abigaille at Deutsche Oper Berlin and in Hamburg; Leonora in *La Forza del Destino* at Deutsche Oper Berlin and Covent Garden; and Santuzza in concert with the NDR Radiophilharmonie.

Ukrainian pianist **Anna Fedorova** has performed with leading ensembles including the Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, Tokyo Symphony, Yomiuri Orchestra, Russian National Orchestra, Utah Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and the Netherlands Philharmonic. In 2018, Ms. Fedorova signed with Channel Classics Records and released six albums, including Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the St. Gallen Symphony Orchestra and the duo album *Silhouettes* with violist Dana Zemtsov. In March, she organized a charity concert with members of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and cellist Maya Fridman, raising €111,000 in humanitarian aid for the victims of the war in Ukraine.

#

CONTACT

Dan Wakin dwakin@metopera.org

Lee Abrahamian labrahamian@metopera.org

Michael San Gabino msangabino@metopera.org

Renata Kapilevich rkapilevich@metopera.org

UKRAINIAN FREEDOM ORCHESTRA

Keri-Lynn Wilson
Conductor

FIRST VIOLINS

Marko Komonko
Concertmaster
Royal Swedish Opera
Marta Kolomyiets
Rostock Philharmonic
Alisa Kuznetsova
Maria Sichko
Lviv Chamber Orchestra "Virtuozы"
Marta Bura
Lviv Chamber Orchestra "Trembita"
Marta Semchyshyn
Lviv Opera House
Anna Bura
International Symphony Orchestra of Lviv
Nazar Fedyuk
Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn
Yaromyr Babsky
Tonkünstler Orchester
Viktor Semchyshyn
Lviv Opera House
Adrian Bodnar
Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra
Kateryna Boychuk
Chamber Orchestra "Virtuozы Kyiva"
Mykola Haviuk
Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra
Iryna Gintova
St. Gallen Orchestra

SECOND VIOLINS

Mykola Tsygankov
Orchestre National de Bretagne
Julia Tokach
K&K Philharmoniker
Olga Malyk
Sudecka Philharmonic
Ostap Manko
Poznan Philharmonic
Julia Rubanova
Kyiv Chamber Orchestra
Iryna Solovei
Kharkiv Opera House
Andrii Chaikovskiy
Lviv Opera House
Liudvika Ivanova
Kyiv National Operetta's Theatre
Marta Kachkovska
Lviv Chamber Orchestra "Trembita"
Viktor Hlybochanu
Kyiv Philharmonic Orchestra
Viktor Ivanov
Kyiv Chamber Orchestra
Hanna Vikhrova
Odesa Philharmonic

VIOLAS

Roksolana Dubova
Lviv Academy Orchestra
Dmytro Kreshchenskyi
St Petersburg Philharmonic
Andrii Chop
Kyiv Chamber Orchestra
Roman Borkovskii
Rotterdam Philharmonic
Lyudmyla Garashchuk
Seoul Symphony Orchestra
Ustym Zhuk
Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra
Kateryna Suprun
National Ensemble "Kyiv Kamerata"
Andriy Tuchapets
National Ensemble "Kyiv Kamerata"
Iya Komarova
Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra
Hryhorii Zavhorodni
Odesa Philharmonic

CELLOS

Viktor Rekaló
Kyiv Symphony Orchestra
Oksana Lytvynenko
Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra
Artem Shmahaylo
Antwerp Symphony Orchestra
Lesya Demkovych
Belgian National Orchestra
Julia Bezushkevych
Lublin Philharmonic
Olga Boychuk
Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra
Mariia Mohylevska
Kyiv Philharmonic Orchestra
Yevgen Dovbysh
Odesa Philharmonic

BASSES

Nazar Stets
National Ensemble "Kyiv Kamerata"
Nicholas Santangelo Schwartz
Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam
Yurii Pryriz
Kyiv National Opera House
Ivan Mukha
Kyiv Municipal Opera & Ballet Theatre
Viktor Ashmarin
Kharkiv Opera House
Serhii Dikariev
Kharkiv Opera House

FLUTE

Ihor Yermak
National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine
Inna Vorobets
Poznan Philharmonic

OBOES

Yuriy Khvostov
Lviv Opera House
Yevhen Marchuk
Lviv Opera House

CLARINETS

Vasyl Riabitskyi
Landespolizeiorchestra Stuttgart
Oleg Moroz
Kyiv National Opera House

BASSOONS

Mark Kreshchenskyi
Aleksandra Naumov
National Symphony Orchestra
of Ukraine

CONTRABASSOON

Ihor Nechesnyi
National Symphony Orchestra
of Ukraine

HORNS

Yevhen Churikov
Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra
Dmytro Mytchenko
Kyiv National Opera House
Dmytro Taran
Kyiv National Opera House
Oleg Bezushkevych
Lublin Philharmonic

TRUMPETS

Ostap Popovych
Teatr Wielki–Polish National Opera
Arsen Khizriiev
Theater Plauen-Zwickau

TROMBONES

Taras Zhelizko
Kyiv National Opera House
Vasyl Shparkyi
SH Landestheater Flensburg
Andriy Shparkyi
Bremen Theater

TUBA

Oleksandr Yushchuk
Poznan Philharmonic

TIMPANI

Dmytro Ilin
National Philharmonic of Ukraine

PERCUSSION

Yevhen Ulianov
National Symphony Orchestra
of Ukraine
Viacheslav Yanchuk
Odesa Philharmonic

HARP

Nataliya Konovalenko
Lviv Opera House

CELESTA

Khrystyna Boretska
International Symphony Orchestra of Lviv

PIANO

Oksana Gorobiyevska
Kyiv National Opera House

UKRAINIAN FREEDOM TOUR



WARSAW
07.28.22

LONDON
07.31.22

MUNICH
08.01.22

ORANGE
08.02.22

BERLIN
08.04.22

EDINBURGH
08.06.22

SNAPE MALTINGS
08.08.22

AMSTERDAM
08.11.22

HAMBURG
08.13.22

NEW YORK
08.18.22 & 08.19.22

**WASHINGTON
D.C.**
08.20.22

UKRAINIAN FREEDOM ORCHESTRA

KERI-LYNN WILSON, CONDUCTOR

LIUDMYLA MONASTYRSKA, SOPRANO
ANNA FEDOROVA, PIANO

PRODUCED BY
THE METROPOLITAN OPERA
TEATR WIELKI-POLISH NATIONAL OPERA

TOUR ORGANIZED BY
 Askonas Holt

 FORD FOUNDATION

Bloomberg
Philanthropies
Driving Digital Innovation in Arts & Culture

UNITED 

Donate to the Ukrainian Ministry of
Culture to support Ukrainian artists.